

[A Local Tale—George Richmond]

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George Richmond (previously interviewed)

“Jack Davis tell you about the time Port Lumpkins was training for a race and pret' near got pinched? Port used to strip down and run up North Main street early in the morning. Did it every day while [?] he was in training, then he'd go to work. Well, the 6:15 train in the morning from Winsted to Bridgeport used to car quite a load. One morning one of them looked out the window and saw [?] Port [?] running up the [?] road like the devil was after him, and near's they could make out he hadn't any clothes on

“They was all excited about it, and when they got to town, they told the station agent to get the constable out after a crazy man who was runnin' up the Torrington road. The agent Tom McDonald, who used to be constable and he went up the [?] Torrington road lookin' for a lunatic, but by that time, of course, Port was out of sight.

“Same thing happened next mornin.' And they called Tom again, but he couldn't find hide nor hair of any crazy man. But a little investigation cleared it up, and Port had a good laugh. So'd everybody else except Tom McDonald. Port said [?] the whistle was his cue to git back to the house as fast as he could so he'd be in time for work; and every mornin'

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when he heard it, he put on a [?] sprint. No wonder they thought he was crazy.” C. B Conn
* * * On The Old Ways Frank Hoyt (Previously interviewed)

“I don't know that this will have any value for [?] [?] you, but it seems to me that if anything is written about the clock business, there ought to be some comparison made between the modern way of doing things and the free and easy [?] attitude of the help in the old days. For [insta?] 2 the parties we used to have in the dial room almost every [?] pay day. We used to have lunch along in the afternoon, and then the first thing you knew there'd be a little informal dancing, maybe somebody'd have a harmonica, or maybe they'd sing or whistle an accompaniment. We had a foreman named Holt, a good fellow, but [?] but nervous. . . You could hardly blame him of course. He'd go around whispering, “Sh-h-h! Take it easy, [?] now or we'll all get in trouble! But nobody paid much attention to him.

“The superintendent's name was Simpkins—he had a little cubby hold of an office right across the way, and he could sometimes see head bobbing up and down in our room as the [?] boys and girls danced. But just about that time he began to be [?] troubled with [?] rheumatism, and he probably [?] found it convenient to be nearsighted as well.

“He quit not long after he began to get infirm. He got so [?] he couldn't hardly leave his office, and the [?] higher [?] ups [?] didn't like it because he [?] couldn't get around to the office [?] conferences. When he built that house up on Judson street and retired, he was hardly able to walk.

“Fred Hoffman was super after he quit, and Hoffman himself left during the war and went over around Plainville or [?] somewhere and starter to [?] manufacture brushes. Was pretty successful too, I [?] understand.

“The office system in the old days was very simple. Each factory had one timekeeper. You came in the morning or noon and put your cheek in the box if you were on time, if not you'd tell the timekeeper and he'd markd down your time. [?] Levi Parsons was head

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bookkeeper and he had one girl helping him, and at that time they did millions of dollars worth of business a year. 3 -2- 3.

“In the stock room they had a boy named Bill [?] Marsh, and all you had to do was go in and ask for what you wanted, and you'd get it. Maybe some of them abused this privilege. They began to find shortages in stock, so they decided to put in a “system.’ They brought an efficiency man in, and he turned the place upside down—put in new arrangements here, and took out old ones there—and it cost the company plenty. But it was the same old story—when they [?] started to rush the help and eliminate old methods they got a lot of ruined work, and in the end they couldn't use the new system. Had to throw it out.

“You talk about those old tower clock record books—it's a wonder they saved them—they made a bonfire of all their old records one time—they would have been just the thing for you—burned every last one of them. They [?] even destroyed the old [?] ledgers Seth Thomas used in his store.

“Old man Gordon—head of the tower clock department—he said he was going to [?] take a vacation some day, and go around to all the places [?] for he had supervised the making of tower clocks. Said in that way he'd get to see the world without having to consult a guide book.

But he only got one vacation in all the time he was there, so far [?] as I know—and then he went to visit an aunt of his out in Kansas.

“I used to have to go to the Case shop some times to do special work, and one time I met a Mr/ Griswold who was in charge [?] the [?] celluloid work. He told me so me fellow in Waterbury had invented this process for some other line, and that they'd begun to use it for clocks instead.

“It was just about this time they were trying out the stem-wind watch, and afterwards they began to make cyclometers for bicycles—there's a product that's probably completely out

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of existence. Two fellows right in this shop 4 invented a stem-winder and tried to interest the company in it—but they couldn't see it. So the boys sold it to Elgin. When the company heard about that they lost their jobs.

“This Mr. Higginbotham—oh yes, he knew watches—he used to give lectures on watchmaking right here in the town hall. After he left here, he got a job in the South Bend Watch Company. Then there was George Neil, who came [?] here after Higginbotham to take charge of the watch shop. He opened a jewelry store after they discontinued the watches. He was also very good.

“When they first put in the [?] lithograph process, the presses required a very muscular man—I know I never could do it. They had a fellow named Mal [?] Johnson working on them, but he had some kind of domestic trouble—he began talking to himself and they took him to an asylum.

“The only improvement in this type of work has been the introduction of photography instead of the old handwork. Most of it now is on aluminum or zinc plates. In the old days those stones used to weigh sometimes 300 pounds each and they cost [?] thirty five cents a pound.

“There's a story I almost forgot—just to show you what I meant when I said it was a free and easy establishment—they don't stand for any horseplay [?] now—there was a fellow [?] named Frank Davis used to be assistant foreman of the plating room. One time he caught a bee, I don't know just how, but anyway he went out and stuck it [?] down Phil Ryan's shirt—he worked [?] at the casting bench—it stung him [?] good and everybody roared when he went hopping around the place. He took it good-natured but he waited his chance, and one day he saw Davis sitting on the [?] edge of the hot water [?] tank. Ryan [?] sneaked up on him—stuck out his hand—and went [?] B-z-z-z-z-z! ‘like a bee—Davis [?] fell right in the tank. And everybody had the [?] laugh on him.”